

Carving wood, casting bronze

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company, who was celebrating its "75th or 100th year anniversary." A way of saying thanks to the pencil company, who for 50 years had bought cedar for its pencils from the California firm.

A 21-foot totem pole is the largest wood carving Patch has done, and his largest bronze is a life-size bust of a Sioux Medicine Man, a limited edition bronze now in its eighth casting. About one-third of his works are sold in Utah, he says, and range in price from \$200 to \$3,000 for wood carvings; from \$300 to \$5,000 for bronzes. Limited editions of the larger pieces are done in 30 or less; the smaller one, about 50.

Patch explains how the lost wax process is used in making bronzes. First he makes a clay model, like the one he's working on in the picture shown here. This model is then used to make a Tuffy rubber mold. Hot waxes are poured into the rubber mold and squished around to make sure all tiny areas are filled.

Once the wax mold is made it is dipped in a ceramic shell solution

over a period of 3-4 weeks until it is built up sufficiently, then placed in a burn-out oven at 2200 degrees to burn out the wax. The ceramic shell is fired like any piece of porcelain. It is then heated to 2600 degrees and the bronze to 2200 degrees. At this temperature, the bronze is so hot it flows like water into all the little crevices of the mold.

Patch has his foundry work done by Young Fine Art Casting in Salt Lake City. "An excellent company. One that has done a lot of monuments for the LDS Church," he adds.

The latest woodcarving the artist is doing is titled "Spirit of the Olympics." The figure will have a torch in his raised hand and his hair will be blowing in the wind. Patch is carving it from a boxelder burl given him by a friend. His works, both the bronzes and woodcarvings, have a "distinctive feeling of freedom, like blowing in the prairie breeze," to quote his friends.

Above his work bench is a plaque inscribed "America isn't perfect but we ain't done yet." Something he heard on the Paul Harvey program. Harvey, he says, is one of his favorite writers and commentators. "I have

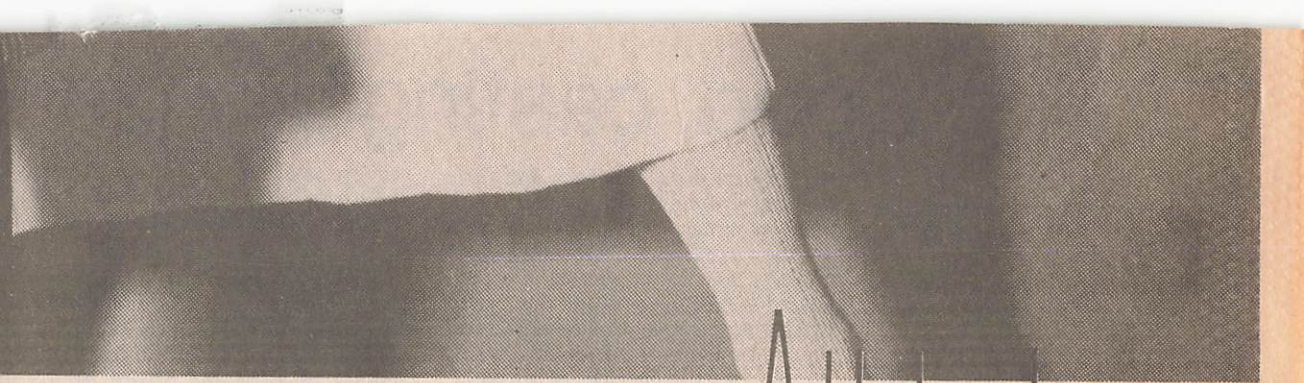
very strong feelings about our country and our freedoms, which I think a lot of people take advantage of," says Patch.

His large library of the Old West is a never-ending source for material for his art. He also is a former member of the Colorado and the Wyoming Associations of Museums, where he has spent countless hours doing research on his subjects.

The woodcarving and the bronze, "Chief's First Son," both shown here, were in the Western Art Exhibition at the Festival of the American West, held recently in Logan. For the past 11 years he also has participated in the craft show at the festival, demonstrating woodcarving.

And what are his future plans?

"Judi and I want to build a studio and gallery, plus an apartment, on top of our earth-covered home. That way we can take care of our parents, who are getting along in years."



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